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## Obrafour

Real Name : **Michael Elliot Kwabena Okyere Darko**

Date Of Birth : **18th November, 1976**

Hometown : **Kwahu Obo**

Record Label : **Last 2 Music**

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Obrafour was born in real life as Michael Elliot Kwabena Okyere Darko in 1976 to Kwaku Okyere Darko and Gladys Agyapomaa in Kwahu-Obo. At the age of 8, Obrafour sang with his late mum at church. Obrafour had his secondary school education at Abetifi. After one term at St. Peters where he was being trained for his A Level, he dropped out in 1995 when his mother died.

Obrafour believes that he was born with music. His mum was a chorister. At the age of 4, he watched her mum sing at church with keen interest. It got to a time that she would invite him to church to sing with her. When he was in secondary school, he formed a quartet and they were doing Gospel songs.

Through some encouragement by some friends, he decided to take up music more seriously. At that time, Reggie Rockstone, the Godfather of hiplife, had released his successful Maka A Maka album and

Obrafour was inspired. He had also realized the emergence of artistes like Ex Doe, Chicago, Akyeame, and Lord Kenya, etc. He decided to be different from these pioneers and create his own style. As he began attending various auditions and performances, he met a few bumps and setbacks until he met Edward Nana Poku Osei aka Hammer.

Hammer helped Obrafour secure a deal with Abraham Ohene Djan (OM Studios) and in late 1999, Obrafour's first album; 'Pae mu ka' was produced and distributed. The album was an acclaimed success and a breadth of fresh air on the music scene. One of the songs, 'Kwame Nkrumah' paid a resounding tribute to the Osagyefo and encouraged Ghanaians to unite and work for the best of the country. 'Pae mu ka' covered various aspects of entertainment of society with songs like the title track, Yaanom, Aden, Agoro no Aso, and Kokonsa . He was adjudged the rapper of the year, new artiste of the year and best hiplife song for 'Pae Mu Ka' at the 2000 Ghana Music Awards.

In 2001, Obrafour released his second album, 'Asem Sebe'. Recognising his love for gospel music, he had as part of this album, the first ever rap gospel song (Enye Nyame a) in Ghana. His premier effort caused a lot of deejays headaches, not sure whether to play the song during gospel or hiplife or even highlife shows. In keeping to his decency and love for socially conscious songs, 'Obibini' implored Africans to stand up for their motherland and work to develop it. 'Okwantuni' asked sojourners in foreign countries to stay in touch with their roots and come home if they were struggling since their home would always be home. 'Who born you by mistake', 'Asem sebe' and 'Twe wo ho' enjoyed massive airplay, and the album had other songs like 'Odo', 'Bra be hwe' and 'Okukuseku'. Obrafour sought the assistance of other beat makers than Hammer and had a few songs with the highlife vein. Even though his sophomore effort could not outclass 'Pae mu ka', it sold many more copies.

He did not forget the hand that fed him and made him what he was then. In another first, he came out with a maxi single album that remembered the love and influence of his mother while praising and underlying the importance of mothers all over. Featuring Tic Tac and Yoggi Doggi on a remix, he released his 'Maame' single in 2002. To this day, "Maame"™ is a Ghanaian music favourite that rules the airwaves each Mother's™ day. The album also had a song he did jointly with Tic Tac for Ashfoam which was very successful.

Obrafour does not consider Maame a full album, and his third LP was released in early 2003 under the name 'Time Out for Adhesion (TOFA)'. In this album, his love for singing is heavily noticed. He had a song duet with longtime backup singer and lover Adjoa Nyarkoa Amponsah, called 'Dee dee ko', Songs like Nyamekye and Sete are favourites of many highlife music lovers. He did not disappoint his hiplife fan base, as Oye Ohene, Adefoode, Ebehhyew were chart busters. Other songs on the album were Mensesa Da, Akok Onini, Hini Me, and Oyonko. TOFA had very good sales following the success of his other LPs.

As if Obrafour could not fall short of pacesetting, he decided to release another album in the same calendar year. His fourth LP, 'NteteE Pa', came out in late 2003 with a number of remixes from the TOFA album. The lead single, however, was Nya Ntete Pa which coincided with his effort to join Ghana's vice president to fight indiscipline in the country. 'Nya Ntete Pa' is the writer's favourite song and the most lyrically involving song to ever come from hiplife's ranks. It was voted the song of the 2003 by Joy FM listeners and Obrafour's legendary was magnified. It also won the best original song (lyrics) at the 2003 Ghana Music Awards. Ntete Pa won the album of the year at the Ghana Music Awards UK for 2004. Other

songs on the album were 'Oye Ohene Remix featuring Tinny', 'Who Jah Bless', 'Sete remix', 'Monfa nsa', and 'Obaa bi'.

He started his own indiscipline campaign which targeted the youth mostly even though he had advice for everyone (from ministers and musicians to taxi drivers and pastors). His Platinum Project on indiscipline was divided into two main segments; the Lecture/Counseling Workshop and the H.E.L.P (Hiplife Education and Literacy Project) Ghana initiative. The Lecture/Counseling Workshop had three principal objectives which were drugs combat, promoting disciplined habits in schools and raising a hundred million cedis for charity (H.E.L.P.). The project involved television series, concerts to raise funds for H.E.L.P. which offered free tutorials and scholarships to children and was to support needy but brilliant students to help them further their education. His project was supported by the vice president himself, the Greater Accra regional minister and other musicians.

In 2004, Obrafour decided to use his record label, Execution Entertainment (which had been responsible for his last three albums) to expose new talents on Ghana's music scene. He produced 'Execution Diary' with the help of Hammer which was the first major compilation album involving hiplife artistes by another hiplife artiste. The LP had songs which introduced relatively new hiplife foot soldiers like Kwaw Kese, Hot Core, Dogo and further enhanced the careers of Tinny. There was also Okyeame Quame with, 4x4 and Yoggi Doggi.

Obrafour's fame transcends the borders of Ghana, as he has performed in Europe as well as the US. His concerts and performances are ones to behold. He has also featured on a number of artistes' tracks, including Tic Tac's Philomina, Daasebre Dwamena's Kokooko remix and Nana Quame's Alimatu. He has also helped bring into the limelight Tinny, Dogo, Yaw Labito and KGPM. In 2007, his album 'Heavy' won him three awards including Hiplife Song, Music Video of the Year, and Hiplife Artist of the Year.



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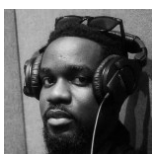
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